

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BAGHDA 00879 240702Z
ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IZ, US
SUBJECT: US-IRAQI RELATIONS--REACTION TO VISITS OF MEDICAL
TEAM AND UNDERSECRETARY HABIB

1. A USUALLY RELIABLE USINT SOURCE WITH CLOSE LINKS TO
IRAQI INTELLIGENCE CLAIMS TO HAVE READ DOCUMENT PRODUCED
BY STAFF MEMBERS OF REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL WHICH
DIRECTS FOREIGN MINISTRY TO SHIFT TO MORE POSITIVE COURSE
IN US-IRAQI RELATIONS. DOCUMENT WAS AUTHORITATIVE BUT
NOT SPECIFIC. SOURCE EXPECTS THAT WE MAY DETECT SUBTLE
SHIFTS IN EMPHASIS DURING CONTACTS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY
OFFICIALS OVER NEXT FEW WEEKS BUT THAT FULL RAMIFICATIONS
OF DIRECTIVE MAY NOT EMERGE FOR ONE OR TWO MONTHS.
ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT BEEN TOLD WHY RCC HAS PRODUCED THIS
PAPER AT THIS TIME, WE SPECULATE THAT IT HAD ITS GENESIS
WITH VISIT OF U.S. MEDICAL TEAM TO EXAMINE SADDAM
HUSSEIN AND RECEIVED FURTHER IMPETUS FROM VISIT TO
BAGHDAD OF UNDER SECRETARY HABIB AND HIS MEETING WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER.

2. DOCUMENT WAS SUPPOSEDLY PREPARED BY STAFFERS OF
RCC FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND OFFICE OF RCC
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN. SUCH OFFICIALS,
SUBJECT TO OVERALL POLICY GUIDANCE FROM HUSSEIN, HAVE
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CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE NOW THAT MEMBERSHIP IN
RCC HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY UNREFLECTIVE OF WHERE
REAL POWER LIES. ORDINARILY, THE PRIMARY LINK FROM
RCC TO FOREIGN MINISTRY IS MINISTER OF STATE HAMID
ALWAN. SINCE ALWAN HAS BEEN AT ISLAMIC CONFERENCE
IN TRIPOLI FOR ENTIRE PERIOD DURING AND FOLLOWING
HABIB VISIT, IT IS PROBABLE THAT FOREIGN MINISTER

HAMMADI HAD MORE THAN USUAL INPUT INTO POLICY DOCUMENT. SOURCE EMPHASIZED THAT SADDAM HUSSEIN, WHO IS STILL CONVALESCING, HAD GIVEN ONLY MOST GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR DIRECTIVE. ANY POLICY SHIFT WOULD NOT BE FLESHED OUT UNTIL HE HAD RETURNED TO HIS DESK AND HAD MORE TIME TO FOCUS ON THE ISSUE.

3. COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION: WE APPEAR TO BE IN A GESTATION PERIOD FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICIAL IRAQI ATTITUDES TOWARD THE U.S. THE WISEST ATTITUDE FOR THE USG AT THIS TIME IS TO REMAIN SENSITIVE TO SIGNS OF AN IRAQI SHIFT, WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE SUBTLE AND DIFFICULT TO DETECT AT THE OUTSET, WITHOUT BETRAYING TOO MUCH EAGERNESS. WE BELIEVE THAT STATEMENT IN DEPARTMENT'S MAY 19 BRIEFING HIT THE RIGHT NOTE, TO THE EXTENT ANY PUBLIC COMMENT IS NECESSARY. CONSIDERATION OF ANY NEW USG INITIATIVE SHOULD AWAIT A CLEARER DEFINITION OF HOW THE IRAQIS ARE REACTING TO WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY DONE.
WILEY

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